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RESEARCH REPORT

U.S. MILITARY POLICY FOR THIRD WORLD CONFLICTS:

IS IT WORKING IN EL SALVADOR?

COLONEL PAUL J. LAMBERT

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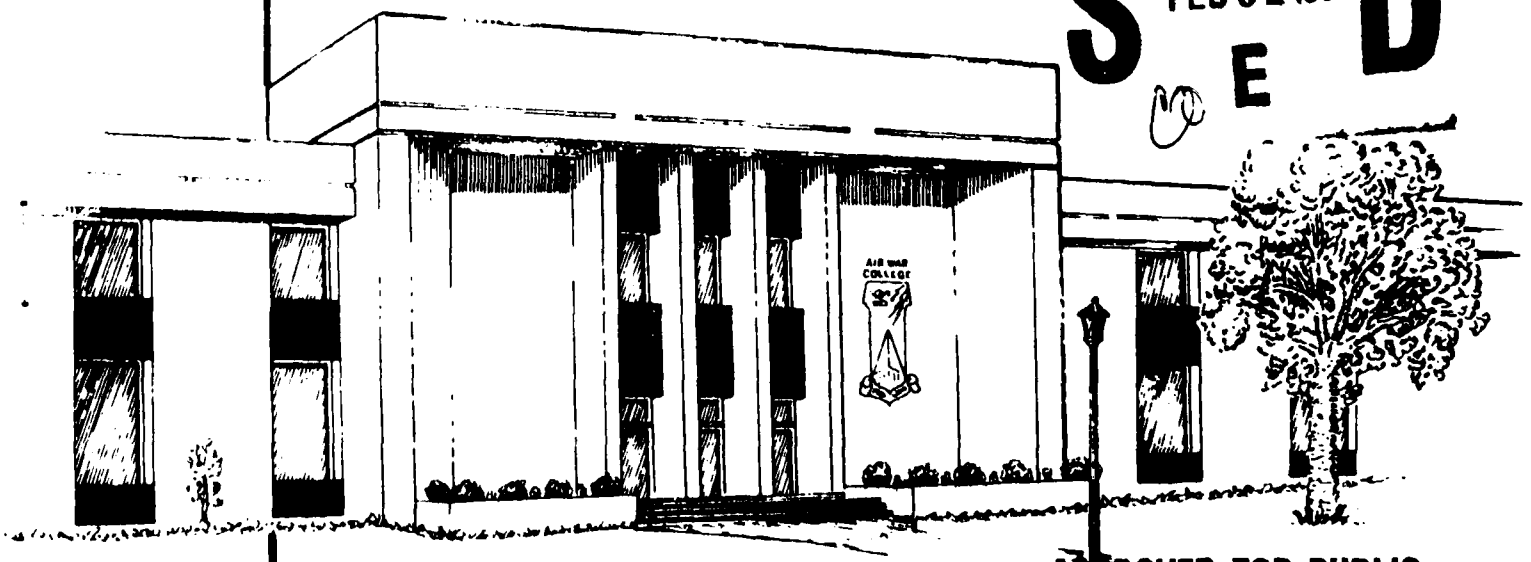

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U.S. MILITARY POLICY FOR THIRD WORLD CONFLICTS: IS IT WORKING IN EL SALVADOR?

by

Paul J. Lambert

Colonel, USAF

A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

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REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Dr. David Albright

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: U.S. Military Policy for Third World Conflicts: Is It Working In El Salvador?

Author: Paul J. Lambert, Colonel, USAF

Since World War II all conflicts in which the United States has been involved have occurred in the Third World. Vietnam caused the United States to seriously question and limit the direct use of American combat forces in "small wars." El Salvador represents the first major test of a military policy that stresses military support of friendly threatened nations without direct U.S. combat involvement. As such, the evolving military policy is the model that will be applied in future U.S. interventions. This study examines the development of this indirect strategy and its application in El Salvador. The author argues that the present U.S. defense structure is poorly organized to carry out an indirect strategy; that U.S. preoccupation with the operational dimensions of warfare diminishes the attention to the basic support mission; that important logistical factors are ignored; and that current security assistance legislation and procedural constraints inhibit successful implementation of policy. The final chapter offers an assessment of U.S. policy and makes specific recommendations to improve U.S. military efforts in El Salvador and future "small wars."

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Colonel Paul J. Lambert (B.A., Kansas State University; MBA, University of Guam) has served in a number of Air Force logistics positions. He was a squadron commander in both SAC and AFLC, and he has completed staff tours at Headquarters, SAC, and Headquarters, United States Air Force. His security assistance experience includes an assignment in Saudi Arabia and involvement in several special projects in Central America. He is a graduate of the Air War College, Class of 1989.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

> The externally supported guerrilla insurgency that confronts us in El Salvador and elsewhere in Central America is really a new kind of war. It differs as much from indigenous revolts as it does from conventional wars. It is more complex, both in concept and in execution.
>
> Dr Henry Kissinger
> National Bipartisan Commission
> on Central America, January 1984

The Nixon "Guam Doctrine" of 1969 heralded a new direction for American foreign and military policy. Originally intended to apply to Asian countries, specifically Vietnam, it was later expanded to include all Third World nations. (82:1-19) No longer were Americans to fight and die in dirty little wars. Rather, the United States would provide the necessary military assistance for threatened nations to defend themselves, or as Ambassador Ellsworth Bunker phrased it, there would be "a changing of the color of the corpses." (79:115)

El Salvador represents the first major test of this new policy since Vietnam. During the past 9 years the United States has provided El Salvador with more than $3 billion in economic and military aid. This small country, the smallest on the Western Hemisphere mainland, is now the fifth largest recipient of U.S. security assistance. (57:14) The administration claims that El Salvador is a success, that communism has been stopped without the direct application of U.S. combat force. Critics point out that the insurgents are still active and that, if anything, U.S. support has only dragged out a bloody civil war.

The question of the effectiveness of U.S. military policy for El Salvador and what implications this military policy has for future U.S. involvement in "small wars" will be addressed in four steps.

First, low-intensity conflict (LIC) and the evolving U.S. military policy for Third World conflicts will be reviewed to establish the basis for present policy. This section will show how the Vietnam experience colored American perceptions and made it more difficult to employ U.S. combat forces overseas. It will also address the limitations and drawbacks associated with the direct use of U.S. combat forces compared with the indirect strategy of only providing military support to host country military forces. In addition, the military and political structure used by the U.S. government to administer the various security assistance programs will be examined to determine if it is effectively organized to carry out the indirect support policy.

The second step will be to look at the present situation in Central America and El Salvador to determine the nature of the low-intensity conflict that the United States is attempting to influence. This will be accomplished by analyzing the political, economic, and social elements contributing to the current instability from both a country and a regional viewpoint. This approach is important, for the study argues that the United States is involved in El Salvador primarily to protect regional interests rather than specific country interests and that U.S. involvement in El Salvador is a "model" that could be applicable to other Third World conflicts.

Once the nature of the low-intensity conflict and U.S. interests and objectives in El Salvador have been established, the study will analyze the implementation of the various military assistance programs in El Salvador by addressing the following questions:

- How has the composition and quality of El Salvador's Armed Forces (ESAF) responded to U.S. assistance?

- How have the insurgents reacted to the influx of U.S. military aid?

- Is the U.S. military properly organized to respond to the indirect role of providing support to El Salvador?

- Has the U.S. military developed the proper perspective to play a support role (instead of a direct combat role) in the ongoing conflict?

- What effects do current legal and administrative constraints have on U.S. efforts to support the ESAF?

Finally, in light of the analysis of the implementation of U.S. military assistance presented in step three, the various dimensions of U.S. military policy will be assessed to determine the effectiveness of U.S. military policy in El Salvador. This will be followed by specific recommendations to improve certain aspects of this policy.

Basically, what happens in El Salvador is important for reasons beyond the immediate situation. Attempts to stabilize the government and obtain an outcome favorable to the United States can provide insights, as they did in Vietnam, into how America can best influence world events. From this perspective, the military policy that emerges from El Salvador will have relevance to future Third World conflicts.

CHAPTER II

U.S. MILITARY STRATEGY FOR THIRD WORLD CONFLICTS

> All planning, particularly strategic planning, must pay attention to the character of contemporary warfare. . . . The stubborn resistance of the Spanish, marred as it was by weakness and inadequacy in particulars, showed what can be accomplished by arming a people and by insurrection.
>
> Carl Von Clausewitz
> On War

Throughout its history the United States has preferred to protect its physical security and national security interests directly. That is, when diplomatic efforts failed to achieve U.S. objectives, America was willing to engage its combat strength (or the threat of it) to reach a favorable solution.

Vietnam, however, represented a watershed event for our nation; the United States was unable to impose its will in what should have been a minor conflict. The ramifications of that war continue to reshape military policy.

Today the United States faces significant problems in developing appropriate military doctrine, strategy, and employment options for combatting low-intensity conflict in the Third World. This process is complicated because the U.S. must be prepared to follow two separate paths. The first, direct use of U.S. combat forces, has become less desirable because of the Vietnam experience. The second path, indirect application of military force, relies on the host government to do the fighting, with U.S. support. This chapter looks at these options in light of the nature of the threat that confronts the United States in the Third World.

Low-Intensity Conflict

During the last 40 years, most armed conflicts in the world and indeed all of the conflicts in which the United States has been involved, directly with combat forces or indirectly through military assistance, have been in the Third World. (86:1) Moreover, since Franklin Roosevelt, all American presidents have left office stained in some way by policies that they pursued in the Third World. Examples include Lyndon Johnson's failure to run for reelection because of Vietnam; Jimmy Carter's foreign policy setback in Iran; John Kennedy's Bay of Pigs fiasco; and most recently Ronald Reagan's arms-for-hostages scandal involving Iran and U.S. support for the Contras in Nicaragua. (64:117-118) Future presidents will undoubtedly face even greater Third World challenges as Third World populations explode and the economic gap between the North and South widens.

Most of the conflicts that occur in the Third World are at a level referred to by the U.S. Army as "short of war." (14:2) Former Secretary of State George Shultz commented during a conference on low-intensity warfare that it is "one of the most pressing problems facing U.S. foreign and defense policy." (23:1) He explained why U.S. adversaries are turning to this form of warfare:

> The ironic fact is, these new and elusive challenges have proliferated, in part, because of our success in deterring nuclear and conventional war. . . . Low-intensity warfare is their answer to our conventional and nuclear strength--a flanking maneuver, in military terms. (23:1)

What exactly is low-intensity conflict? Although there are many definitions, the one currently used by the Department of Defense (DOD) is:

> Low-intensity conflict is a limited politico-military struggle to achieve political, social, economic, or psychological objectives. It is often protracted and ranges from diplomatic, economic, and psycho-social pressures through terrorism and insurgency. Low-intensity conflict is generally confined to a geographic area and is often characterized by constraints on the weaponry, tactics, and the level of violence. (87:2)

In developing the specific strategies and tactics for U.S. military forces, military doctrine has separated low-intensity conflict into a number of categories or missions. They are:

(1) Counterinsurgency: Support to Third World governments combatting insurgent threats, such as U.S. aid to El Salvador.

(2) Proinsurgency: Support of friendly insurgents attempting to remove the current government. U.S. support of the Afghan rebels and Nicaraguan contras are current examples.

(3) Peacetime contingency operations: Limited military actions to project power. Examples include rescue missions (Grenada) and power projection (Naval presence in the Persian Gulf).

(4) Counterterrorism: Normally actions to punish, prevent, or terminate terrorism. The U.S. retaliatory raid on Libya in 1986 is a good illustration.

(5) Peacekeeping operations: Usually to safeguard cease-fire agreements.

(6) Antidrug operations: A new mission for the U.S. military. (54:55-74)

At times these categories will merge and overlap. For example, in Central America, the United States is currently providing counterinsurgency aid to El Salvador while giving limited proinsurgency support to the Nicaraguan resistance. In March 1988, U.S. combat forces were deployed to Honduras as a show of force when the Honduran border was threatened by Nicaragua. The U.S. military will soon be involved in antidrug operations in the region and maintains a continuing capability to carry out counterterrorist operations, if necessary.

Third world counterinsurgencies, such as the current struggle in El Salvador, will continue to comprise the most significant low-intensity threat for the foreseeable future. (54:75) Less threatening, but more probable, than a conventional or nuclear Soviet-American conflict, low-intensity conflict can have cumulative effects on U.S. power projection, basing rights, access to raw materials, and standing as a leader in the world community. (72:13-14) To meet these challenges the DOD is developing appropriate force packages, equipment, policies, and roles for U.S. military forces. What makes the normal development of strategy and tactics more difficult for low-intensity warfare is the question of the direct or indirect use of U.S. combat power.

Direct Strategy

Writing on U.S. defense strategy, former Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger outlined six tests that should be applied to a specific situation before U.S. combat forces are committed abroad. These may be summarized as:

(1) Do not commit combat forces unless U.S. vital interests are at stake.

(2) If combat forces are committed, use sufficient personnel and equipment to win.

(3) If combat forces are committed, have well-defined political and military objectives.

(4) Continually reassess and adjust forces as necessary.

(5) Gain bipartisan Congressional support and a public consensus before committing combat forces.

(6) Only use U.S. combat forces as a last resort. (95:687)

Secretary Weinberger prefaced these tests with comments on the Vietnam war. He pointed out that in the early 1960s, limited war was thought of as a diplomatic instrument, one which could be incrementally intensified or eased to reach an acceptable settlement. (95:684) But Vietnam undermined this perception in a number of ways. It aroused public resistance to protracted U.S. military involvement. It demonstrated the limits of U.S. power, especially in Third World countries. And it resulted in several restrictions on the presidential use of military forces abroad--such as the "War Powers Act." (23:3)

These observations lead to the question of what use, if any, there is for U.S. combat forces in low-intensity conflict. From the previous discussion on categories or missions of low-intensity conflict, it appears that at least four of the six missions are appropriate

for U.S. combat forces. These are peacetime contingency operations, counterterrorism, peacekeeping operations, and anti-drug operations. These missions are the current object of intense Pentagon study and review to develop appropriate doctrine, command and force structures, and equipment to handle them.

The other two categories, counterinsurgency and proinsurgency, appear less likely to have roles for U.S. combat forces because of the Vietnam experience. However, even these missions are being reexamined in the post-Vietnam environment. For example, Richard Nixon's "Guam Doctrine," discussed earlier, foresaw the limited use of offshore U.S. Naval and Air Force combat forces. (79:116-117)

It can be expected that in the Third World the direct use of U.S. combat troops will be limited to those situations in which they can be employed "decisively, swiftly, and with discrimination." (86:25) Overall strategy will emphasize using U.S. forces primarily in a support role, complementing security assistance programs. (86:25-26)

Indirect Strategy

The United States strategy for low-intensity conflict states:

> Our own military forces have demonstrated capabilities to engage in low-intensity conflict, and these capabilities have improved substantially in the last several years. But the most appropriate application of U.S. military power is usually indirect through security assistance--training, advisory help, logistic support, and the supply of essential military equipment. (33:35)

This strategy recognizes an indirect application of U.S. military force which differs significantly from the type of direct warfare the U.S. military departments have traditionally planned. The

indirect strategy correctly recognizes that the root cause of most insurgencies is the lack of political, economic, and social development and that the primary reason for military assistance is to help the government protect the people while root causes of instability are corrected through internal solutions. (86:26)

Unfortunately, the United States government is not well prepared to pursue the noncombat roles necessary to assist Third World countries engaged in low-intensity conflict. (80:26-27) This deficiency is due to several factors. First, since the American Civil War (1861-65), U.S. military policy has assumed that war can be conducted by bringing the right number of the best-equipped combat forces to the battlefield and maintaining them for as long as necessary. (46:976-978) Thus, U.S. military strategy has concentrated on the operational dimensions of war; i.e., the tactics and strategy necessary to win wars, treating the logistical dimensions as given. (3:24) However, most Third World nations are confronted with monetary, technological, and logistics infrastructure problems that often drive support problems ahead of operational concerns.

Second, present security assistance laws were designed to transfer military equipment to NATO and other Allies in peacetime, not support Third World countries at war. (67:109) Countries with small military infrastructures, such as El Salvador, have continual problems translating wartime military requirements into the right equipment and training support. These result, in part, from the bureaucratic checks and balances built into the system to assure full cost accounting.

U.S. security assistance, as with all U.S. foreign aid, is administered by the State Department. Within DOD the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA) plans, administers, and coordinates with the military services to provide required services and equipment. (80:22-24) DSAA's charter to recoup all costs and "balance the books" has made the system more responsive to financial management than to warfighting. Furthermore, because security assistance is often looked upon as "extra work" by the military departments, foreign military forces do not always receive the equivalent support given to U.S. combat forces as a result of priority classifications and internal DOD management direction. (71:30) Finally, the tendency to transfer wornout, obsolete, or excess equipment often makes sustainability and long-term support difficult. (36:38)

Third, the security assistance system is overly sensitive to political concerns. This situation is caused, to a large degree, by the federal oversights and approval structure governing security assistance. Security assistance fund requests are contained in the yearly "Presidential appropriations" rather than the 5-year DOD budget. (32:21) As previously mentioned, foreign aid (including security assistance) is administered by the State Department. As a result, security assistance appropriation requests are considered by the Foreign Relations Committees of Congress, not the Armed Services Committees. This state of affairs makes it difficult for Congress to arrive at an integrated national security consensus and long-term strategy balancing the direct use of U.S. military force with the

indirect use of friendly governments to meet threats to U.S. security interests. (80:23-24) In addition, the security assistance budget tends to become burdened with amendments and provisions that often seem at odds with U.S. security aims. Some examples include restricting security assistance from multiyear funding, withholding professional training assistance to countries that fail to meet U.S. standards for respect of human rights, and restrictions on the use of security assistance funds for police/law-enforcement training. (77:21)

Finally, Americans are uncomfortable with wars in which they have limited operational influence on the battlefield. This is perhaps best demonstrated by U.S. preoccupation with advisory efforts versus support efforts even when the value of American tactical advise is at best questionable.

CHAPTER III

THE SALVADORAN MODEL

> The concerting of the power of the Soviet Union and Cuba to extend their presence and influence into vulnerable areas of the Western Hemisphere is a direct threat to U.S. security interests.
>
> Dr Henry Kissinger
> National Bipartisan
> Commission on Central America
> January 1984

From the review of U.S. military policy for Third World conflicts presented in Chapter II, it can be surmised that political considerations are driving the United States to an indirect military policy, especially in situations that require a long-term commitment of military power. El Salvador represents such a situation. It is the first major test of the expanded "Nixon Doctrine" of supporting threatened Third World countries without the direct use of U.S. combat forces.

To understand the nature of the threat that the United States is attempting to address in El Salvador, it is necessary to look at the conflict from both a regional and a country perspective. This is because the U.S. evaluates the rise or fall of most Third World nations in terms of its regional impact. However, U.S. military policy has to deal with the realities of conflict as they exist in a specific country. In this regard El Salvador is representative of the type of insurgency that the U.S. is likely to encounter in the Third World.

Regional Perspective

El Salvador, although of some strategic interest in itself, does not justify the financial, political, and military commitments

that the United States is making. U.S. motives for involvement there can be more clearly seen when looking at the region as a whole.

In an address to the nation in June 1986, President Ronald Reagan outlined why the U.S. has vital interests in Central America. They are summarized below:

- Over one-half of U.S. imports and exports travel through the Central American/Caribbean Basin area.

- NATO is heavily dependent on the sea lanes around Central America and the Panama Canal for resupply.

- Cuba is a significant military threat to Central America and is turning Nicaragua into a Soviet military base.

- Communist aggression has the potential to spread throughout Latin America. (28:2-3)

From a national security viewpoint the United States is also concerned that continued Soviet military involvement in Central America will encourage violence in the hemisphere, thereby necessitating the devotion of increasing defense resources to the region and weakening the ability of the United States to project power and defend other interests. Also, continued defeats in Central America could create a perception throughout the world that America is unable to influence events even in its own backyard. (74:93)

Recognizing that the present crisis in Central America has no single cause, the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (NBCCA) identified the continued poor performance of the region's economies as the major factor that must be corrected to stop the

general deterioration of the region. (22:11) However, the United States must be careful not to blame itself for the economic situation. Writing on why Latin America is poor, Michael Novak noted that "it is odd, on the face of it, to blame the poverty of Latin America on North American capitalism." (66:66) He points out that 200 years ago both cultures had relatively equal chances of succeeding in the "New World," and if anything Latin America had greater resources--gold, silver, favorable climate, etc. But during the last two centuries North America has become the richer of the continents because of its political, economic, and moral-cultural system. (66:67-68)

The other major factor contributing to the persistent decline of the region relates to the legitimacy of governments. (74:10-11) Since the early 1800s when most Central American nations achieved independence, they have been ruled by military regimes or dictatorships. This situation has led to instability of past governments and a lack of personal freedoms. (21:1-2) As the region transitions to more open forms of government, the challenge facing the United States is to ensure that the nations are free to choose for themselves the type of government they want, without outside threats or pressures. (74:12)

The NBCCA also stressed that meaningful economic and political changes are impossible without improvements in the ability of friendly governments to protect their populations from communist insurgency threats. U.S. security assistance is the key that makes the protective "security shield" possible. (17:15-16)

Historically, however, U.S. foreign policy in Latin America has not concentrated on improving the economic and social imbalances between the North and the South. The fact is that U.S. policy toward Latin America has been remarkably consistent since President James Monroe proclaimed his doctrine in 1823. Its dominant feature has been to exclude other great powers from the region. (15:341) This has brought about a defensive, economy-of-force military strategy for the region, according to which the United States has reacted only during a crisis to reestablish the status quo. (96:27-29) Similarly, economic and social development programs have only been introduced when necessary to regain stability--i.e., President John Kennedy's Alliance for Progress after Fidel Castro's emergence in Cuba and the Caribbean Basin Initiative in reaction to the rise to power in Grenada and Nicaragua of self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist forces. (6:67-69;34:479-491)

Rather than military strength per se, the United States has depended on a positive political climate, military agreements, and alliances such as the Organization of American States (OAS) for regional security. This approach has been reinforced by the fact that the region has been relatively isolated, and the individual countries have had little power. Unfortunately, in recent years revolutionary movements, Cuban and Soviet activism, and increasing economic and social problems have all had destabilizing effects. (44:9,219)

U.S. military responsibility in the Central American region belongs to U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), headquartered in Panama. The overall mission of the command is to protect vital U.S. interests by providing a stable Southern flank. (81:6) The approximately 10,000 U.S. military personnel in SOUTHCOM are primarily in place for immediate defense of the Panama Canal. (90:9) Direct military operations in other Central American countries would undoubtedly require their augmentation with other military forces. SOUTHCOM manages the military portions of the various security assistance programs through small military groups in selected countries. These military personnel, plus the ambassador and his staff make up the country team.

U.S. Interests and Policies in El Salvador

Looking from a regional perspective, the United States views El Salvador as a battlefield in an East-West conflict. In a Department of State report which became known as the Reagan "White Paper" on El Salvador, the administration described the situation as a communist insurgency: "Their (Soviet's) objective in El Salvador as elsewhere is to bring about--at little cost to themselves--the overthrow of the established government and the imposition of a Communist regime in defiance of the will of the Salvadoran people." (19:2)

This attitude led the first Reagan administration to emphasize military assistance as the key to improving the Salvadoran situation. While preventing a communist takeover, this strategy resulted in a military stalemate with little hope of a clear victory. (30:219;55:78;65:A-25) However, as the war dragged into the second

Reagan administration, the complexity of low-intensity conflict became more evident. In addition, the 1984 Report of the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (74) stressed the need for a comprehensive package, combining security assistance with economic development, diplomacy, and social reform. (24:1-2)

A brief review of El Salvador's political, economic, and security problems highlights the intricate nature of the conflict. After gaining independence from Spain in 1821, El Salvador developed into a country of large coffee plantations. A strong oligarchy, supported by a powerful military, became the dominant political power. Despite an earlier communist uprising in 1932 in which approximately 30,000 peasants died, the government was not seriously threatened until 1979, when a small faction within the armed forces forced the president, General Carlos Romero, to flee to Guatemala. A revolutionary junta was formed, with representation from the rival political parties and the military. The junta collapsed in early 1980, when promised reforms did not materialize. (43:91;92:2-5)

Careful U.S. nurturing of three national elections since 1982 has given El Salvador a new constitution and some basic political freedoms. However, the majority of Salvadorans still live in poverty and fear of violence from both the left and right. (56:32)

Economic problems will persist for El Salvador whatever the political and military outcomes there. The civil war that has raged since 1980 has wrecked the country's economy. (92:2-4) U.S. economic

aid, which has amounted to more than $2 billion during the past 8 years, makes up now about 80 percent of the government's budget. (52:402)

Even before the war El Salvador was burdened "with the most rigid class structure and worst income inequality in all of Latin America." (60:1084) With an area of 8,260 square miles (Map Appendix I) El Salvador is the smallest country on the Western Hemisphere mainland, but its population density is the largest, 618 inhabitants per square mile--greater than India's. (38:3-5;50:1-3) High unemployment, 40 percent, and a large landless population also help to make El Salvador an economic "basket case."

Recent history demonstrates how war, political unrest, and natural disasters have contributed to El Salvador's economic woes.

- 1969: The "soccer war" with Honduras closed an emigration safety valve and pushed the economy into a recession. (660:1085)

- 1972-1981: Terrorist activities--i.e., murder, bombings, kidnappings, etc., by various guerrilla groups--forced an exodus of foreign executives and diplomats. (69:81-90)

- 1981-1984: General civil war. Unified guerrilla forces attacked major military bases and controlled large portions of the country, and there was talk of a "final offensive." (7:XV-XX) Widespread labor unrest caused a sharp decline in all sectors. GNP declined at an average of 5 percent a year. (92:10-11)

- 1986: A major earthquake hit the capital, San Salvador. Approximately 300,000 people were left homeless. (50:1986-5) Damage to the economy and private sector was estimated at more than $1 billion. (91:682)

- 1984-present: Bolstered by U.S. military assistance, the Salvadoran military has forced the guerrillas to abandon large-scale military operations. Consequently, the guerrillas have focused their attacks on the economic infrastructure; i.e., power production, bridges, etc. (78:10) Guerrilla sabotage to the economy is estimated at more than $2 billion. (37:422)

El Salvador's military has a long history of involvement and intervention in government affairs. It has traditionally supported the landed oligarchy. (35:33) Since 1900, moreover, the military has intervened directly in the political process eight times. (10:2-3) The military, however, has not stepped in to install or support a dictator, like a Somoza. Rather, government rule itself has centered in the military, with presidents coming from the officer corps. (12:52-53)

The fact that the military has not intervened since 1979 is probably the result of two factors. First, continuation of U.S. aid is contingent on the formation of freely elected governments. Second, the violent nature of the ongoing civil war has caused many military officers to realize that a new political process is necessary if the country is to survive. Nevertheless, it is clear that the military still wields considerable influence over political affairs. Thus, how

the military reacts to the necessary concessions in building a centrist government will, to a large degree, determine the nation's ability to survive.

Forces of Instability

There are many forces of instability in El Salvador that threaten security. The most obvious is the guerrilla forces attempting to overthrow the government. Others include the economic and political problems previously discussed. Some factors are dependent on perspective. For example, U.S. security assistance is viewed by some as simply prolonging a bloody civil war. Two factors, however, deserve more extended discussion.

Catholic "Liberation Theology," which developed in Latin America in the 1960s and which a lot of priests and nuns in El Salvador actively support is viewed by many as destabilizing, for it raises the expectations of the poor and urges them to organize and change their conditions. (62:B284) As one Catholic priest from El Salvador expressed its message, "their hunger, their diseases, their infant mortality, their unemployment, their unpaid wages, were not the will of God, but the results of the greed of a few Salvadorans and their own passivism." (7:67-69)

Right-wing death squads and repressive paramilitary forces such as the Organizacion Democrática Nacionalists (ORDEN) have also played a role in instability. They have served as quasi-official instruments of control and revenge. (29:9-10) To be sure, there is some evidence in Guatemala, for example--to suggest the effectiveness of repressive

force in low-intensity conflict. (48:582) Yet fundamental American values of justice and respect for human rights produce repulsion at these measures, and, in fact, the United States has tied continued assistance to meeting minimum human rights standards. (74:103-104)

The Guerrillas

Although the mountainous terrain and population density of El Salvador is not conducive to the type of guerrilla warfare promoted by Che Guevara, certain features of the political and economic situation make it suited for a revolutionary guerrilla movement. For example, El Salvador has no large middle class. Most peasants are engaged in agriculture and do not own their own land. And, the Central government was until recently very repressive. (40:397-399) Even though some factors are missing, such as a strong dictator to attack or a well-organized Marxist revolutionary party, Guevara noted . . . "it is not necessary to wait until all conditions for making revolution exist; the insurrection can create them." (40:47)

The evaluation of the five major guerrilla groups that sprang up in El Salvador during the 1960s and 70s has been documented in many other studies. Though they all have expressed a Marxist philosophy, they initially operated independently, and at times competed with one another for territory, recruits, and support. (13:14) They joined together in 1979, at the urging of Fidel Castro, as a precondition for Soviet/Cuban aid. (25:5; 58:71-72) The result was the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN), which became the coordinating structure of the guerrilla forces and the Democratic Revolutionary

Front (FDR), formed to unite the representatives of the various left-wing political parties. (55:73)

Guerrilla combat strength has fallen from a high of 12,000 in 1982 to an estimated 6,000 in 1987. (91:692) Their goal continues to be overthrow of the present government and establishment of a new political and social order. (47:A1)

El Salvador's Dilemma

Thus, El Salvador finds itself in a dilemma similar to many other Third World countries, with no easy solutions. It has political, military, and economic problems that are complex and interrelated. Just as there is no pure military solution to the current conflict, there are also no simple political or economic solutions.

CHAPTER IV

APPLICATION OF U.S. MILITARY POLICY

> . . . The Armed Forces of El Salvador are doing what the civilian authorities have been asking them to do--defending the people and their country's increasingly democratic political processes . . . . But this progress . . . will be stopped in its tracks and could be reversed if U.S. support is cut off or interrupted.
>
> Langhorne A. Motley
> Asst Secretary of State for Latin America
> March 1984

So far this study has examined the nature of low-intensity conflict; evolving U.S. military policy to confront this challenge; and the regional and internal dynamics of the economic, political, and military problems that the United States is attempting to correct in El Salvador. We now turn to an analysis of the application of the military policy.

The United States is providing military assistance to El Salvador to influence the outcome of the current conflict. As shown in appendix II, this security assistance (military and economic) has grown astonishingly since FY 80. In a 10-year period the United States will have invested more than $3.5 billion in a country smaller than the state of Vermont. As the administration is quick to point out, economic aid accounts for about 70 percent of the assistance. However, economic aid, in most cases, is only helping repair war damage and allowing the economy to survive. (76:80-91)

This chapter analyzes the application of U.S. military policy in El Salvador; i.e., the indirect strategy of providing security

assistance in lieu of combat forces. This military policy is looked at from two perspectives. First, how has U.S. military assistance influenced El Salvador's armed forces and their ability to control the conflict? Second, how effectively is the United States carrying out its military policy? It is argued that the present U.S. defense structure is poorly organized to conduct an indirect military strategy, that U.S. preoccupation with the operational dimensions of warfare diminishes the support mission, that important logistical factors are ignored, and that current security assistance legislation and procedural constraints impede successful implementation of policy.

El Salvador's Armed Forces (ESAF)

Traditionally, the Salvadoran armed forces have had two roles. The first has been to fight external conventional wars with neighboring countries, while the second has been to serve as the guardians of the political status quo, stepping in when necessary to defend the ruling oligarchy or to replace an unpopular president. (9:80-85)

The armed forces were ill-prepared to deal with the internal civil war that erupted in 1979. Therefore, in confronting this threat, Salvadoran security forces grew from about 12,000 in 1980 to almost 60,000 by 1987. (29:47) Appendix III depicts the current order of battle for El Salvador's armed forces.

To defeat a counterinsurgency it is generally argued that government forces must have a 10-to-1 superiority in military forces. (2:28;74:98;90:13) In 1982, at the height of the guerrilla offensive,

rebel forces were estimated at 12,000 and government forces at 24,000. (2:5;91:692) That only provided the ESAF a 2-to-1 advantage over the insurgents. By 1987 guerrilla strength had fallen to approximately 6,000, but Salvadoran military strength, bolstered by U.S. security assistance, had grown to almost 60,000, thereby providing the necessary 10-to-1 ratio. (90:13)

Equipment for the ESAF

For the most part, U.S. military assistance has not provided highly sophisticated or technologically advanced weapons to El Salvador. This fact reflects a complex set of circumstances.

As one military writer has noted, most Third World countries like El Salvador require "inexpensive, simple, and easily operated and maintained light armored vehicles, river patrol craft, light transports that can double as gunships, and light armed surveillance aircraft." (67:108) Unfortunately, most U.S. weapon systems do not meet these criteria. Yet the United States is "prohibited by law from developing equipment and weapons specifically for Third World countries." (99:12)

As a consequence, a Catch-22 situation has arisen, especially for the Salvadoran Air Force and Navy. Older but simpler (excess or obsolete) U.S. weapons are often much harder to support logistically since supply lines have dried up and older equipment normally requires more repair and inspection. However, newer, sophisticated equipment may exceed the need and technological capability that El Salvador has, and, most important, its price tag may surpass what El Salvador can afford.

Therefore, the United States has tended to supply El Salvador with what it calls "older but proven weapon systems," a metaphor for obsolete equipment. A recent Air Force study notes that this practice causes problems for both countries:

> If a country purchases an older USAF aircraft because it is a "bargain," only to discover that it is expensive or impossible to maintain, neither the seller nor the buyer nation is a "winner." One loses credibility, the other capability. (71:16)

For example, El Salvador operates a fleet of U.S. C-47 transport aircraft and AC-47 gunships. Because these aircraft are no longer in the USAF inventory, the United States, by law, cannot stock spare parts. The USAF and El Salvador have increasingly had to turn to civilian contractors and foreign suppliers to keep the aircraft operational. (49:88;71:16-17)

Another illustration is the UH-1H "Huey" helicopter fleet operated by the Salvadorans. Most of these aircraft saw extensive combat in Vietnam. Pulled out of the USAF "bone yard" in the early 1980s, they are "sometimes nearly useless." (63:27) Normally, more than 50 percent are out of commission for parts or maintenance at any given moment. (63:27)

Training of the ESAF

As can be imagined, the tremendous growth in the size of the ESAF has also caused training problems. A recent Christian Science Monitor article stated that U.S. military assistance has transformed the Salvadoran military "from an inefficient brutal bunch of 12,000 men into a professional counterrevolutionary force of 57,000 soldiers," (57:16) but this is misleading for a couple of reasons. First, as

previously mentioned, most enlisted troops are low-paid conscripts who only serve 2 years. Even in the elite hunter battalions trained in the United States such as "Atlacat" and "Roman Belaso," only 50 percent of the original trainees have remained after 2 years. (63:28-29) Second, for the most part, current U.S. security assistance legislation prohibits training of paramilitary forces such as the national guard and the national police. (5:52) These forces make up approximately 20 percent of El Salvador's total security forces and are often accused of being the most unprofessional and most likely to commit human rights abuses.

The War

The U.S. response to the war in El Salvador has gone through various stages of intensity in reaction to the strength and tactics of the combatants. When U.S. military advisers first arrived in 1980, there was talk of the guerrillas' conducting a "final offensive." The Pentagon assessed that the ESAF were "not organized to fight the counterinsurgency now engulfing the entire country." (63:25) In an attempt to stop the probable collapse of the armed forces, the United States rushed in military equipment and supplies, including $80 million in emergency presidential funds (Appendix II). In conjunction with Salvadoran officers, the United States also conducted a top-to-bottom strategic analysis of the ESAF's military capabilities and long-range objectives. Known as the Woerner Report, after its author, General Fred Woerner, USA, this study became the guide for addressing the initial manpower, training, equipment, and logistics requirements of

the ESAF. (41:62-64) Coupled with a political package put together by Assistant Secretary of State Thomas Enders that stressed bipartisan Congressional support, the United States approached the Salvadoran situation from an unusually coherent political-military viewpoint. In fact, this approach has been called a "model for responding to friendly governments under leftist guerrilla attack." (41:62)

The Woerner Report served its purpose by transforming the ESAF from "a constabulary into a fighting force" and stabilizing the war. (2:21) In effect, it provided the military with the tools to fight. But the report was not a comprehensive plan to defeat the guerrillas. That end required a program which combined the political, economic, psychological, and military instruments of government power into a strategy that provided security while allowing for pacification programs to restore agriculture and industry. (74:101)

As in the case of the Woerner Report, the strategy devised, called the National Campaign Plan (NCP), was put together by a joint U.S.-Salvadoran team that included representation from a wide range of government ministries. It was then initiated in two provinces, San Vicente and Usulután, in March 1983.

The NCP failed for several reasons (29:28-31;54:120-124;68:31):

(1) The areas selected were too large to be adequately defended by the military.

(2) The local paramilitary civil-defense units were not properly trained or equipped to prevent reinfiltration by guerrillas.

(3) With large numbers of the ESAF tied up in San Vicente and Usulután, the guerrillas were able to move portions of their forces to other areas.

(4) The government was not sufficiently prepared or motivated to carry out the necessary civic action programs.

Although the NCP failed to win many "hearts and minds" in the targeted areas, continued pressure by the ESAF, backed by ever-increasing military assistance from the United States (Appendix II), forced the FMLN to forego large military operations. In fact, the success of the ESAF forced the insurgents to adopt a new strategy, built around small units, that was aimed at destroying the country's economic infrastructure. The guerrillas felt this strategy would undermine the political gains of the Christian Democrats, who were registering some successes in forming a centralist government, and counteract the positive effects of U.S. aid on economic recovery. (62:275-280)

In 1986, another pacification program similar to the NCP was introduced. Known as the Counterinsurgency Campaign: United for Reconstruction (UFR), it "emphasized a four-phase approach of cleansing operations, consolidation, reconstruction, and construction." (54:121) It differed from the NCP in that it attempted to gain support from the private sector, the church, labor unions, etc., in addition to government agencies. It also granted more authority to local military commanders to carry out counterinsurgency operations, train and direct paramilitary forces, and conduct psychological operations. (54:119-122)

Thus far, UFR has had mixed results. Although the military seems to be having success in establishing "secure areas," the pacification projects are not making inroads on the serious social and economic conditions that perpetuate the war. (83:24-26)

Advice and Tactics

U.S. efforts to influence ESAF battlefield tactics have had minimal success. Part of the problem lies in the nature of low-intensity conflict and the notable lack of success the United States has had in this type of conflict. In addition, U.S. military advisers are forbidden to accompany Salvadoran units engaged in combat; thus, the American advisers, many of whom have not seen combat, cannot even observe the results of their own training and advice. The results are predictable. Salvadorans, with considerably more combat experience now than their U.S. advisers, treat the advice they receive as dated and, at times, even questionable. (89:54) A Salvadoran army officer's comments speak to this point:

> You send these lieutenant colonels and majors down here; they have at best 6 months or a year of combat in Vietnam, as platoon leaders or company commanders. I have been in combat 3 years as a battalion commander. I have forgotten more about this kind of fighting than they know. I don't need their advice on tactics or operations. (89:54)

Last but not least, as guerrillas have changed tactics, such as the move to economic sabotage, U.S. advisers have been slow to recognize these transitions and develop countertactics. (1:51-52; 2:36-38)

U.S. Military Strategy

Recently, a former commander of the U.S. military group in El Salvador was asked about his involvement in and management of the security assistance programs in that country. Even though our president has described such undertakings as "the most appropriate application of U.S. military power" in low-intensity conflict (33:35), the officer replied:

> As it turned out during my tenure I had a good warrant officer and a civilian who understood the ins and outs and the subtleties of security assistance management and which forms to use, but I really never got personally involved in that. I had other things to do which I viewed as much more important. That's a very small aspect of the job. (11:5-6)

This attitude is neither atypical nor surprising, for U.S. military policy has traditionally concentrated on the operational dimensions of warfare. As previously discussed in Chapter II, the United States has been able to ignore the logistical dimensions of war since its early years. This predisposition is reinforced by conventional military education in the theories of Clausewitz and Jomini. For example:

> Clausewitz's dogmatic assertion of priorities--his subordination of the logistical element in war to the operational--may have owed something to a prejudice common to all fighting soldiers in all eras. (46:976)

The importance of having the correct military perspective cannot be overstated. A recent U.S. Army report on joint low-intensity conflict noted that more attention to the logistical dimensions in Vietnam could have prevented direct U.S. involvement.

> The importance of logistics was demonstrated during the early stages of the Vietnam conflict. As early as 1962, the establishment of a centralized United States logistical organization was proposed but disapproved. Had a system been established in country to help develop and strengthen the Vietnamese logistical system, United States combat forces may never have been required. (73:13-1)

The major contributing factor to the perspective problem in El Salvador is the fragmented U.S. command and control structure. Richard Nixon's "Guam Doctrine" substantially changed the military's role from that of warfighter to that of support in Third World conflicts; however, there has been no corresponding reorganization within DOD to accommodate this shift in strategy.

There are at least five and sometimes seven different U.S. departments and agencies directly involved in the war and making U.S. military policy in El Salvador: the State Department, the Defense Security Assistance Agency (DSAA), U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), the country team, and the military departments, with no clear lead organization to direct the support efforts. Some examples of the type of problems that result from this structure are discussed below.

Unity of Command. Each department or agency becomes more concerned with its portion of the assistance efforts than with providing overall support to El Salvador. For example, SOUTHCOM has regional responsibility for El Salvador, while DSAA is responsible for worldwide military assistance. Since DSAA is a DOD agency and reports directly to the Secretary of Defense, it is difficult for SOUTHCOM, which reports to the JCS, to control DSAA's level of support for El Salvador. Other support problems arise when prime players do not see

eye to eye. In the early 1980s the American ambassador in El Salvador would routinely deny the SOUTHCOM commander "country clearance" to enter the country because of their disagreement on the correct focus of the war. (2:10-11)

Complexity. Military history teaches that simplicity is a key to victory; however, the operationally aligned command responsibility for El Salvador has turned even simple support tasks into difficult projects. The USAF found that selling or giving away excess and scrap military and medical supplies, which the Salvadoran Air Force wanted, was not possible due to cumbersome procedures and the number of different organizations involved. (71:34-35)

Resource Management. Military assistance funds for El Salvador are controlled by the State Department. Through a complicated process, these funds are put into accounts which the ESAF use to buy their equipment, goods and services, etc. The service material commands within each U.S. military department normally act as the suppliers. The funds administered by the military departments are separated into various categories of accounts known as "cases." (80:25) As each service operates somewhat differently, funds, once earmarked, become difficult to transfer. This inflexibility has caused major problems for the small Salvadoran joint staff at the "Estado Mayor" who are trying to run a changing war. At times they have had to cancel essential warfighting supplies because the needed funds were tied up in other cases. (2:13-15)

The Forgotten Support Dimension

These and other problems persist because the United States does not view its role in El Salvador as primarily one of support. Security assistance and logistics management problems are often relegated to a secondary status, while military leaders "worry" about battlefield tactics. The small Salvadoran military structure finds itself in two battles, one with the guerrillas and another with the complicated DOD support bureaucracy.

Writing on the operator-logistician disconnect, Colonel Gene Bartlow noted that "programming and planning logistics for the war may be the most complex element in the operational art of war, perhaps even more difficult than strategy and tactics." (3:29) This function becomes an even greater challenge when relying on cooperative rather than U.S. forces to fight a war.

If U.S. troops were actually fighting the war, SOUTHCOM would plug directly into the Army, Navy, and Air Force for logistical support. The U.S. government has spent billions of dollars to develop and refine a responsive system that can operate equally well in peace and war. However, even this highly developed system has major deficiencies. Writing on ways to increase logistics responsiveness, Colonel Albert Ramroth argues that in past wars time and the great resources of America have made up for logistical inefficiencies. (70:9) To ensure battlefield success the United States has invariably turned to the wasteful "push system" to deliver material to the combat theater. In Vietnam, such an approach resulted in what became known as

the "Logistics Snowball" principle. This says that "all logistics, unless controlled, will grow inordinately like a huge wet snowball that becomes unmanageable." (70:9-10)

Logistical problems are compounded in El Salvador for the following reasons:

(1) The U.S. military presence in country is limited to 55 trainers and advisers, and very few of these are logisticians. (71:49)

(2) The Salvadoran military has very few trained logisticians.

(3) The "push system" cannot be employed as a cure-all because of strict budgetary limitations.

(4) The Salvadorans operate a basic, manual, Spanish-language logistical system that does not tie in well to automated U.S. logistical management systems. (71:13)

(5) Many of the weapon systems operated by the ESAF are difficult to support because they are either nonstandard or no longer in the U.S. inventory. (71:16)

(6) The current "case management" practices applied to logistics support are too burdensome and restrict the most effective use of military assistance funds. (71:26)

(7) Logistical support of the ESAF is handled somewhat differently by each of the U.S. military departments, thereby increasing the administrative burden on the ESAF.

(8) ESAF logistical material is often damaged or unusable because U.S. training efforts have not stressed basic preservation

practices such as corrosion control, inventory protection and rotation, and proper packaging.

(9) Transportation delays are common due to port-hold times, in-shipment loss/damage, clearance/customs issues, and frequency of service. (71:69)

A number of studies, such as the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America (74) and the DOD's Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy (72), have recommended major changes to the military portions of the present security assistance programs. They point out that these programs have proven inadequate and are poorly organized to support Third World efforts to combat low-intensity conflict. Those criticisms that have the greatest impact on El Salvador include the following:

(1) The present security assistance program is designed for peacetime and does not easily transition to wartime. (42:39) For example, the supply priority for the Salvadoran Air Force is normally lower than comparable USAF units. There is no built-in mechanism to raise supply priorities for countries at war.

(2) Security assistance is funded through annual rather than multiyear appropriations. (74:102-103) This type of funding has made it "absolutely impossible for the Salvadorans to do any planning." (2:13) It forces the ESAF to focus on short-range survival rather than long-range goals, and the result has been such counterproductive practices as hoarding of basic supplies. (2:13-14) Also, it has hindered the development of an adequate logistical infrastructure, which is a long-term investment.

(3) Current security assistance legislation prohibits leasing of equipment. A recent paper by the Regional Conflict Working Group for the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy notes:

> . . . U.S. leasing the Salvadorans major end-items of equipment in recent years, like military helicopters, vice selling these to the Salvadorans, would have been much more conducive to success of the Central American Peace Initiative through reducing regional apprehensions over armament levels. (80:35)

(4) Police and paramilitary training is severely limited under current legislation. As previously mentioned, paramilitary forces such as the National Guard and National Police in El Salvador have the worst record there for unprofessionalism. Consequently, El Salvador was recently granted a temporary exemption to use $10 million of security assistance funds to train and equip paramilitary forces (80:48)

(5) Provisions of the U.S. anti-deficiency law severely restrict the use of U.S. military training and exercise funds when they benefit security assistance programs. (80:42) The purpose of this law is to prevent the U.S. military from underwriting security assistance; however, there are many opportunities in El Salvador for U.S. forces to gain valuable and unique training in a wartime environment that is not available elsewhere. There would also be significant spin-off benefits for the Salvadorans such as training in battle-damage repair of aircraft, emergency supply procedures, rapid runway repair, etc.

(6) Security assistance funds cannot normally be used to purchase foreign-made military equipment. (80:54) This prohibition

affects countries such as El Salvador that cannot always find suitable U.S. equipment to fill their requirements. For example, El Salvador operates a fleet of obsolete (World War II) C-47 transport and gunship aircraft. It has little choice but to continue the expensive upgrade and modification of these aging aircraft because the United States does not offer a comparable aircraft with which to replace them. (49:88)

(7) Finally, the current security assistance system measures the success of the ESAF by the wrong standards. Because of current legislation, DSAA focuses on El Salvador's ability to manage funds and cases rather than win battles. (39:100) If the United States were fighting the war, cost accounting would be of incidental importance.

CHAPTER V

ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The problems that confront U.S. military policy in El Salvador are a challenge to American security interests in Central America and to the ability of the United States to influence events in future Third World conflicts. These problems, to a large degree, have risen from U.S. difficulties in fully comprehending the nature of low-intensity conflict and in applying an indirect strategy that places the United States in a supporting role.

During the past 9 years, U.S. military policy, bolstered by massive spending, has shown the ability to prevent defeat. So far it has not produced a victory. This chapter assesses the overall effectiveness of U.S. military policy in El Salvador and makes specific recommendations to improve certain aspects of that policy.

Assessment

The following matrix offers an evaluation of the eight major dimensions of U.S. Military policy. (4:24)

ASSESSMENT OF US MILITARY POLICY IN EL SALVADOR									
DIMENSION OF MILITARY POLICY	COMPONENT	SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF COMPONENT				SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION OF DIMENSION			
		Exc	Sat	Marg	Unsat	Exc	Sat	Marg	Unsat
1. EL SALVADOR'S ARMED FORCES	Size	X							
	Professionalism			X					
	Leadership		X					X	
	Retention				X				
	Paramilitary Forces				X				
2. US EQUIPMENT FOR THE ESAF	Quantity	X							
	Quality			X			X		
	Retention of Training			X					
3. TRAINING THE ESAF	Quantity	X							
	Quality	X					X		
	Retention of Training			X					
4. INFLUENCE OF THE ESAF ON THE THREAT	Size		X						
	Quality		X						
	Resupply & Sustainment				X			X	
	Popular Support			X					
5. US ADVICE AND TACTICS	US Advisory Role				X				
	ESAF Targetry			X					
	ESAF Command & Control			X				X	
	ESAF Mobility			X					
6. US MILITARY STRATEGY	Policy & Doctrine			X					
	Perspective				X				
	Strategic Strategy			X					X
	Unity of Command				X				
7. US LOGISTICAL SUPPORT	Security Assistance Prog				X				
	Military Depts				X				X
	Unified Command			X					
	Country Team				X				
8. INFLUENCE OF ESAF ON LENGTH OF CONFLICT	Ability to Control				X				
	Ability to Terminate				X				X
OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF US MILITARY POLICY								MARGINAL	

Current U.S. military policy is assessed as marginal. Furthermore, the war is stalemated.

Both of these factors work against the governments of El Salvador and the United States. Continued U.S. assistance is contingent on broad political and popular support. Historically, these components fade with time or lack of success. A long war also works against a positive outcome, in that the longer the counterinsurgency survives, the more likely it is to gain legitimacy in the eyes of observers. Moreover, prolonged conflict will only add to the economic and social damage already suffered by El Salvador.

Any long-term settlement of the conflict will depend on a comprehensive approach to the contributing military, economic, and social problems that abound in El Salvador. These problems, however, stand little chance of improvement unless the government can provide its citizens a secure environment. It is important, then, that the United States continually look for ways to improve its military support to El Salvador.

Recommended Changes

Recommendations with respect to each of the eight dimensions of U.S. military policy are presented below. It should be remembered that two dimensions (number 4, influence of the ESAF on the threat, and number 8, influence of the ESAF on the length of conflict) relate directly to warfighting and are therefore dependent, to a great degree, on the valor and resourcefulness of the Salvadorans.

1. El Salvador's Armed Forces. As discussed in Chapter IV, U.S. security assistance has helped the Salvadorans increase the size of their military to the level necessary to defeat the insurgents. To improve leadership and technical competence, the United States must convince the Salvadorans to create a professional noncommissioned or warrant officer corps. Another area that requires immediate attention is the training, equipping, and force structure of paramilitary police forces. The United States should authorize a permanent exception to El Salvador to use security assistance funds to improve paramilitary forces.

2. U.S. Equipment for the ESAF. This dimension is rated as satisfactory; however, as Salvadoran military equipment requires replacement the United States will not, in most cases, have adequate follow-on equipment to fill the specialized requirements of low-intensity conflict. The DOD should designate a lead agency to test and recommend the purchase of foreign equipment and/or develop new equipment specifically for foreign military sales, when appropriate. This lead agency could be the new Unified Command for security assistance recommended in the discussion of dimension 6 (U.S. military strategy). The same agency would also work with the military service commands to ensure that equipment is supportable and replenishment supplies are available.

3. Training the ESAF. The United States has assisted the ESAF in establishing a comprehensive training program for its various military services, but this training is not being retained because of the high turnover of enlistees. The United States should convince the

Salvadorans that they can improve the quality of their combat units and save money by holding on to a portion of this enlisted force to fill skilled technical and leadership positions and serve as trainers.

4. Influence of the ESAF on the Threat. The ESAF were able to prevent an insurgent victory in the early 1980s and have forced the guerrillas into small-scale sabotage tactics. To destroy the insurgents' popular rural base, the ESAF must be encouraged to work with other government agencies and the private sector to correct economic and social imbalances. Current U.S. security assistance legislation that prohibits the U.S. military from assisting in carrying out the economic aid portions of security assistance should be amended to allow U.S. and El Salvadoran military units to help with civic action projects. Insurgent resupply and sustainment will become much more difficult once the rural population is pacified.

5. U.S. Advice and Tactics. As discussed in Chapter IV, the best use of American advisers is in training roles and in conducting joint studies with the Salvadorans on overall capabilities and strategy and the development of pacification programs. For U.S. advisers to influence day-to-day battlefield tactics, current restrictions on the use of Americans in combat areas would have to be lifted. This is not recommended, for the extensive combat experience and skill of the ESAF make it unnecessary to risk exposing Americans to hostile fire. The most appropriate assistance that the United States can provide in the tactical realm is to help the Salvadorans develop a tactical intelligence system, a tactical command and control communication network, and improved mobility concepts.

6. U.S. Military Strategy. This dimension measures the effectiveness of the doctrine, strategy, and command structure used to implement U.S. military policy. The current U.S. command structure is not conducive to successful support of a Third World government battling a low-intensity conflict. DSAA, which reports to the Secretary of Defense, is malaligned and not in the JCS warfighting chain of command.

Dividing security assistance among the regional unified commands would be cost prohibitive and divisive. It is also unfeasible to expect the new Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) to be responsible for both the direct and indirect use of military power in low-intensity conflict, for indirect use of the military requires an organization structured and oriented to deal specifically with support instead of operational issues. The best solution would be to form a new unified command for the military portions of security assistance that would relate the indirect strategy of military assistance to the regional unified commands in much the same way as the new unified Transportation Command is responsible for transportation. In addition to administering military assistance, this command would also be responsible for advocating the development and acquisition of weapons and equipment to support situations where U.S. equipment is not available or too technologically advanced to meet the needs of Third World nations. It could also take the lead in formulating military

strategy, military doctrine, and the correct military perspective for the indirect application of military power.

7. U.S. Logistical Support. This dimension also suffers from the unsatisfactory organizational structure currently used to carry out U.S. military policy in the Third World. In addition to placing military assistance in the warfighting chain of command, it is essential to modify current security legislation and logistical support procedures to make them more effective. The specific steps that would be most beneficial with respect to support of the ESAF include:

(a) Placing more U.S. military logisticians in El Salvador.

(b) Developing simple, inexpensive automated logistics management systems to replace El Salvador's manual logistics systems, allowing easier interface with the U.S. logistical structure.

(c) Revising security assistance legislation prohibiting development of specific equipment and weapons for Third World countries.

(d) Deemphasizing present "case management" requirements of the security assistance programs to allow the ESAF greater flexibility in managing military funds.

(e) Standardizing the logistical support procedures for security assistance within the service material commands.

(f) Establishing realistic supply and logistical priorities to ensure support levels consistent with El Salvador's wartime mission.

(g) Instituting multiyear funding of security assistance appropriations.

(h) Revising security assistance legislation to allow leasing of U.S. equipment and purchase of foreign equipment.

(i) Revamping portions of the anti-deficiency law to allow DOD funding of mutually beneficial training exercises in Third World countries.

8. Influence of the ESAF on Length of Conflict. As mentioned, a long war works to the disadvantage of the Salvadoran and U.S. governments. U.S. military policy can provide the tools to fight; however, it is up to the Salvadorans to combine the various elements of U.S. assistance into a comprehensive package that can deal with the normal fog and friction of war. The United States can help this process by evaluating the security assistance programs in El Salvador in terms of success on the battlefield rather than by financial management standards.

The Salvadorans have demonstrated the ability to fight bravely in a long, bloody war. Implementing the recommendations presented in this chapter can significantly improve the ESAF's ability to control and terminate the conflicts.

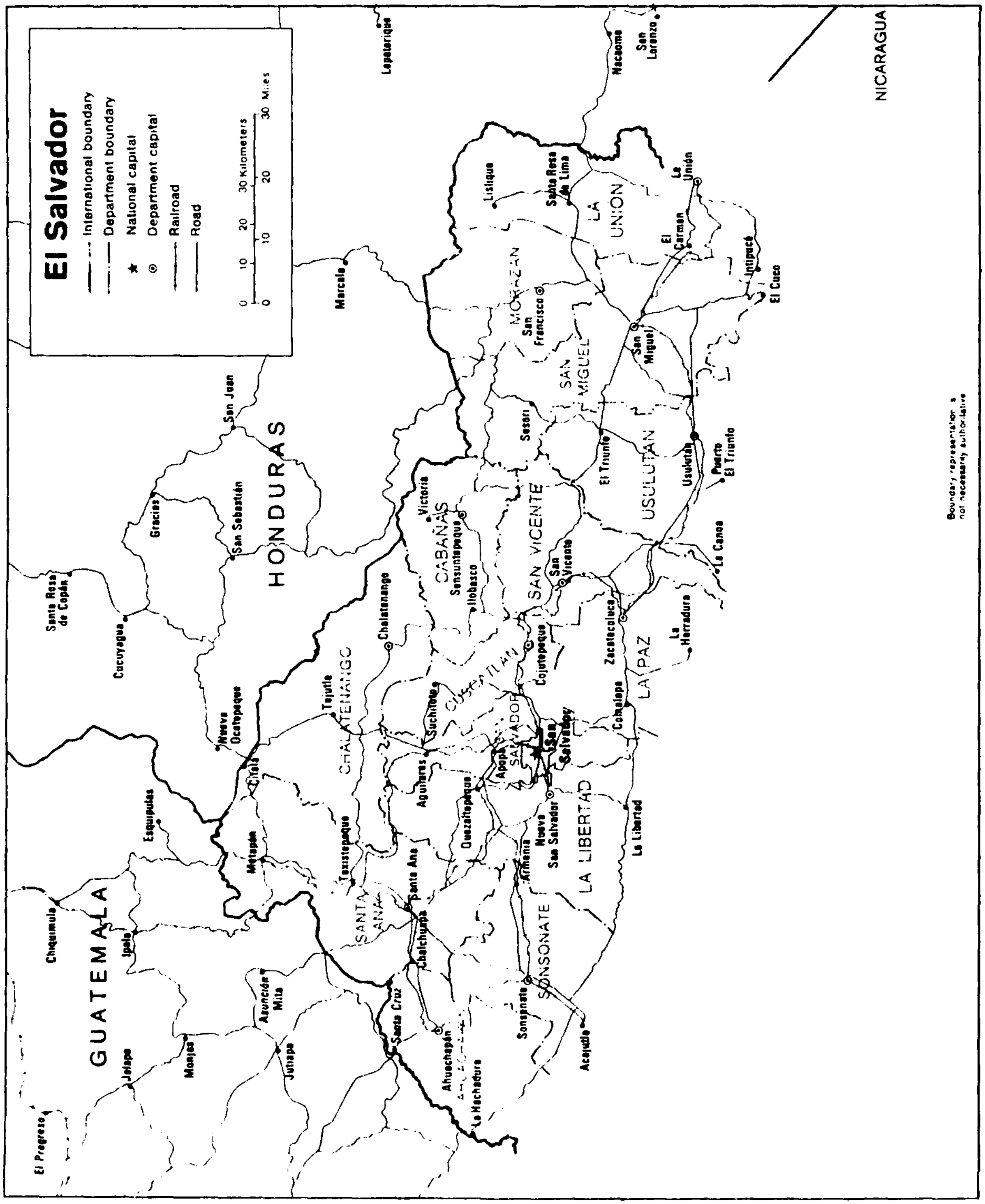
Conclusions

An insurgency is a complex phenomenon involving numerous military, political, economic, and social factors. It is not just a simple military problem waiting for the right military solution. Similarly, it is a mistake to underestimate the importance of the

military element in a low-intensity conflict. The armed forces are often the only stable instrument of government power, and it is difficult for a government to make other reforms if it is unable to provide basic security to its citizens.

It should be apparent from this study that U.S. efforts to influence Third World conflicts by indirect military means are not fully developed. Thus, the ongoing conflict in El Salvador is important not only because of U.S. interests in Central America but also because the emerging military policy from this conflict will serve as the model for future Third World involvement.

In developing an indirect approach to support friendly Third World governments, the United States should concentrate on developing a better understanding of the low-intensity conflict environment and challenge; improve the organization and process used to carry out military policy; determine the "correct" level of support and involvement for each situation based on U.S. interests and the objectives and limitations of the host government; revise security assistance legislation and procedures that inhibit battlefield success; and view low-intensity conflict as a long-term challenge that requires new and innovative military approaches.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El Cuco
Intipucá
El Carmen
Santa Rosa de Lima
Lislique
Marcala
San Juan
Gracias
San Sebastián
Santa Rosa de Copán
Cucuyagua
Nueva Ocotepeque
Esquipulas
Chiquimula
Ipala
Asunción Mita
Jutiapa
Monjas
Jalapa
El Progreso
Lepaterique
Nacaome
San Lorenzo
Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative
Base 504510 8-80 (545437)

APPENDIX II

MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO EL SALVADOR, FY 79-89

(In millions of $)

	FY79	FY80	FY81	FY82	FY83	FY84	FY85	FY86	FY87	FY88	PROPOSED FY89
MILITARY AID											
Section 506 FAA*	-	-	25.0	55.0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Foreign Military Sales	-	5.7	10.0	16.5	46.50	18.5	10.0	-	-	-	-
Military Assistance	-	-	-	8.5	33.50	176.75	124.75	120.0	134.0	115.0	95.0
Training	-	.2	.5	2.0	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.6	1.5	1.5
TOTAL	-	5.9	35.5	82.0	81.30	196.55	136.25	121.8	135.6	116.5	96.5
ECONOMIC AID											
Economic Support Funds	-	9.1	44.9	115.0	140.0	210.2	195.0	177.0	336.75	200.0	185.0
Development Assistance	6.9	43.2	33.4	36.2	58.8	62.2	66.7	83.9	75.46	75.6	67.7
Peace Corps	1.6	.5	.4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
P.L. 480**	2.9	5.5	35.3	34.9	43.1	51.1	52.6	54.4	47.2	40.9	39.8
TOTAL	11.4	58.3	114.0	186.1	241.9	323.5	314.3	315.3	459.41	316.5	292.5
TOTAL ASSISTANCE BY FY	11.4	64.2	149.5	268.1	323.20	520.05	450.55	437.1	595.0	433.0	389.0

TOTAL ASSISTANCE FY79-89: 3,641.1 (2,633.2 economic and 1,007.9 military)

* Emergency powers granted to the President under section 506 of the Foreign Assistance Act to provide military assistance in case of an "unforeseen emergency."

** Food for Peace Program

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APPENDIX III

EL SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES - ORDER OF BATTLE

Total Military Forces: 48,000 (In addition, there are about 10,000 police forces--National Police, National Guard, and Treasury Police--that can fight as light infantry)

Army (43,000): 6 infantry brigades, 3 military zones, 14 departments

Major Units: Maneuver Battalions (41) - Infantry and Light Infantry
Mechanized Cavalry Regiment (1) - 2 battalions
Special Forces Groups (2) - 6 COIN battalions
Artillery Regiments (1) - 3 battalions
Engineer Battalion (1)
Anti-Aircraft Battalion (1) - Assigned to Air Force defense
Paratroop Battalion (1) - Assigned to Air Force

Air Force (3,000): 63 Fixed-Wing Aircraft and 70 Helicopters

Major Units: 2 Fighter-Bomber Squadrons (A-37B and French Ouragan)
1 Transport Squadron (C-47, C-123, DC-6, Israeli Arava)
1 Recce Flight (O-2A)
1 COIN Flight (AC-47 Gunship)
1 Training Flight (T-41A, French Magister)
1 Helicopter Squadron
(UH-1M Gunship, H-500 Attack, UH-1H Transport)
French Alouett Transport, French Lama Trainer)

Navy (2,000 - includes 600 marines): 33 Patrol Boats

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